

# Power production saves lives, jets

by Airman 1st Class  
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They're on the flight line everyday, preparing life-saving systems that can be taken for granted. It isn't until a jet lands without brakes that these hand-

ful of Airmen are seen as heroes.

The 49th Civil Engineer Squadron power production barrier maintenance shop is responsible for maintaining Holloman's arresting cable barrier and end-of-runway net systems that save aircraft during in-flight emergencies.

The arresting cables use two hydraulic

brakes on either side of a runway to bring a jet to a gentle stop. The end-of-runway netting provides a smooth and even grip on an aircraft wing to bring it to a complete stop.

Maintenance Airmen inspect these systems at least six times per day said Master Sgt. Marwin Tala del Cid, power production NCO in charge, because when there are lives at stake, there is no room for cutting corners.

"Our crews have different assignments based on how busy the flight line is," he said. "They will inspect the entire system ranging from hydraulic levels to the cable's integrity to ensure it's ready for any emergency."

The shop's arresting cable was put to work July 29 when an F-4 Phantom hydraulic system failed.

The pilot, without the ability to slow the aircraft, took the arresting cable at 205 knots. The maintenance team made its way to the runway where they rebuilt the cable that was built to withstand an F-4 at 185 knots. The runway was restored to flying status in only seven hours while the pilot and his electronic warfare officer left the accident unhurt.

Sergeant Tala del Cid said the dedication and attention to detail of barrier maintenance Airmen keep the base's recovery systems up to par.

"The work they have done has potentially saved the lives of 30 pilots," he said. "There is a sense of pride instilled in these troops knowing that someone out there appreciates all the hard work they do."



Staff Sgt. Adalberto Chavez-Cortez turns the BAK-12 barrier system on during a systems test. The BAK-12 is routinely tested throughout the day for operational readiness.



Airman 1st Class Stephen Shell looks over the cow bell during a daily inspection. The cow bell is a nickname for the adapter that connects the steel cable to the 8-inch burlap tape.



Staff Sgt. Adalberto Chavez-Cortez ties a nylon rope to the steel cable barrier system. As an aircraft lands, the landing gear passes over the cable. The nylon rope holds the cable down, allowing the aircraft's tailhook to successfully catch the cable.



Photos by Airman 1st Class Stephen Collier

Airman 1st Class Stephen Shell inspects an end-of-runway net for frays or tears. Inspections are routinely done on the netting to ensure that it is stable and ready in the event of an in-flight emergency.

Staff Sgt. Adalberto Chavez-Cortez and Airman 1st Class Stephen Shell walk along side the steel cable barrier. Every day, power production Airmen inspect the cable for frays and damage.